**DC 97                                                 Historical Background**

**Parley P. Pratt**

It was now the summer of 1833. Immigration had poured into the County of Jackson in great numbers; and the Church in that county now numbered upwards of one thousand souls. These had all purchased lands and paid for them, and most of them were improving in buildings and in cultivation. Peace and plenty had crowned their labors, and the wilderness became a fruitful field, and the solitary place began to bud and blossom as the rose.

They lived in peace and quiet; no lawsuits with each other or with the world; few or no debts were contracted; few promises broken; there were no thieves, robbers, or murderers; few or no idlers; all seemed to worship God with a ready heart. On Sundays the people assembled to preach, pray, sing, and receive the ordinances of God. Other days all seemed busy in the various pursuits of industry. In short, there has seldom, if ever, been a happier people upon the earth than the Church of the Saints now were.

…That portion of the inhabitants of Jackson County which did not belong to the Church, became jealous of our growing influence and numbers. Political demagogues were afraid we should rule the county; and religious priests and bigots felt that we were powerful rivals, and about to excel all other societies in the State in numbers, and in power and influence.

These feelings, and the false statements and influences growing out of them, gave rise to the organization of a company of outlaws, whose avowed object was to drive the Church of the Saints from the county.

These were composed of lawyers, magistrates, county officers, civil and military; religious ministers, and great numbers of the ignorant and uninformed portion of the population, whose prejudices were easily aroused.

They commenced operations by assembling in great numbers, destroying a printing office and its materials; demolishing dwellings and stores, and plundering the contents and strewing them in the street; cutting open feather beds, breaking furniture, destroying fences and crops, whipping, threatening and variously abusing men, women and children, etc.

The saints submitted to these outrages for a time in all patience, without defense or resistance of any kind, supposing that the public authorities would of course put a stop to them, as in duty bound.

But they were soon convinced to the contrary, and were compelled to take up arms for defense; and also to make the most vigorous exertions to prosecute according to law. We assembled in small bodies in different neighborhoods, and stood on guard during the nights, being ready to march in a moment to any place of attack. (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt,* edited by his son, Parley P. Pratt [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 75-76.)

**Joseph Smith**

On the 20th of July, the mob collected, and demanded the discontinuance of the Church printing establishment in Jackson county, the closing of the store, and the cessation of all mechanical labors. The brethren refused compliance, and the consequence was that the house of W. W. Phelps, which contained the printing establishment, was thrown down, the materials taken possession of by the mob, many papers destroyed, and the family and furniture thrown out of doors.

The mob then proceeded to violence towards **Edward Partridge**, the Bishop of the Church, as he relates in his autobiography:

I was taken from my house by the mob, George Simpson being their leader, who escorted me about half a mile, to the court house, on the public square in Independence; and then and there, a few rods from said court house, surrounded by hundreds of the mob, I was stripped of my hat, coat and vest and daubed with tar from head to foot, and then had a quantity of feathers put upon me; and all this because I would not agree to leave the county, and my home where I had lived two years.

Before tarring and feathering me I was permitted to speak. I told them that the Saints had suffered persecution in all ages of the world; that I had done nothing which ought to offend anyone; that if they abused me, they would abuse an innocent person; that I was willing to suffer for the sake of Christ; but, to leave the country, I was not then willing to consent to it. By this time the multitude made so much noise that I could not be heard: some were cursing and swearing, saying, "call upon your Jesus," etc.; others were equally noisy in trying to still the rest, that they might be enabled to hear what I was saying.

Until after I had spoken, I knew not what they intended to do with me, whether to kill me, to whip me, or what else I knew not. I bore my abuse with so much resignation and meekness, that it appeared to astound the multitude, who permitted me to retire in silence, many looking very solemn, their sympathies having been touched as I thought; and as to myself, I was so filled with the Spirit and love of God, that I had no hatred towards my persecutors or anyone else.

Charles Allen was next stripped and tarred and feathered, because he would not agree to leave the county, or deny the Book of Mormon. Others were brought up to be served likewise or whipped.

But from some cause the mob ceased operations, and adjourned until Tuesday, the 23rd. Elder Sidney Gilbert, the keeper of the store, agreed to close it; and that may have been one reason why the work of destruction was suddenly stopped for two days,

In the course of this day's wicked, outrageous, and unlawful proceedings, many solemn realities of human degradation, as well as thrilling incidents were presented to the Saints. An armed and well organized mob, in a government professing to be governed by law, with the Lieutenant Governor (Lilburn W. Boggs), the second officer in the state, calmly looking on, and secretly aiding every movement, saying to the Saints, "You now know what our Jackson boys can do, and you must leave the county;" and all the justices, judges, constables, sheriffs, and military officers, headed by such western missionaries and clergymen as the Reverends McCoy, Kavanaugh, Hunter, Fitzhugh, Pixley, Likens, and Lovelady, consisting of Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and all the different sects of religionists that inhabited that country, with that great moral reformer, and register of the land office at Lexington, forty miles east, known as the head and father of the Cumberland Presbyterians, even the Reverend Finis Ewing, publicly publishing that "Mormons were the common enemies of mankind, and ought to be destroyed"—all these solemn realities were enough to melt the heart of a savage; while there was not a solitary offense on record, or proof, that a Saint had broken the law of the land.

When Bishop Partridge, who was without guile, and Elder Charles Allen, walked off, coated like some unnamed, unknown bipeds, one of the sisters cried aloud: "While you, who have done this wicked deed, must suffer the vengeance of God, they, having endured persecution, can rejoice, for henceforth for them, is laid up a crown eternal in the heavens."

Surely this was a time for awful reflection; man, unrestrained, like the brute beast, may torment the body; but God will punish the soul!

After the mob had retired, and while evening was spreading her dark mantle over the scene, as if to hide it from the gaze of day, men, women, and children, who had been driven or frightened from their homes, by yells and threats, began to return from their hiding places in thickets, corn-fields, woods, and groves, and view with heavy hearts the scene of desolation and wo: and while they mourned over fallen man, they rejoiced with joy unspeakable that they were accounted worthy to suffer in the glorious cause of their Divine Master. There lay the printing office a heap of ruins; Elder Phelps's furniture strewed over the garden as common plunder; the revelations, book works, papers, and press in the hands of the mob, as the booty of highway robbers; there was Bishop Partridge, in the midst of his family, with a few friends, endeavoring to scrape off the tar which, from its eating his flesh, seemed to have been prepared with lime, pearl-ash, acid, or some flesh-eating substance, to destroy him; and there was Charles Allen in the same awful condition. The heart sickens at the recital, how much more at the picture! More than once, those people, in this boasted land of liberty, were brought into jeopardy, and threatened with expulsion or death, because they desired to worship God according to the revelations of heaven, the constitution of their country, and the dictates of their own consciences. Oh, liberty, how art thou fallen! Alas, clergymen, where is your charity!

Early in the morning of the 23rd of July, the mob again assembled, armed with weapons of war, and bearing a red flag; whereupon the Elders, led by the Spirit of God, and in order to save time, and stop the effusion of blood, entered into a treaty with the mob, to leave the county within a certain time. The treaty was as follows:

Memorandum of agreement between the undersigned of the Mormon Society in Jackson County, Missouri, and a committee appointed by a public meeting of the citizens of said county, made on the 23rd day of July, 1833.

It is understood that the undersigned members of the society, do give their solemn pledges, each for himself, as follows, to-wit:—

That Oliver Cowdery, W. W. Phelps, William M'Lellin, Edward Partridge, Lyman Wight, Simeon Carter, Peter and John Whitmer, and Harvey H. Whitlock shall remove with their families out of this county on or before the first day of January next, and that they, as well as the two hereinafter named, use all their influence to induce all the brethren now here to remove as soon as possible: one half, say, by the first of January next, and all by the first day of April next; to advise and try all means in their power to stop any more of their sect from moving to this county…

The Star is not again to be published nor a press set up by any of the society in this county…

Which report of the committee was unanimously adopted by the meeting, and thereupon the meeting adjourned sine die.

Richard Simpson, Chairman.

S. D. Lucas,

J. H. Flournoy, Secretaries.

The execution of this treaty presented an opportunity for the brethren in Zion to confer with the Presidency of the Church in Ohio concerning their situation, which they improved two or three days later by sending Elder Oliver Cowdery as a special messenger to Kirtland.

On the second day of August, the Western Monitor, printed at Fayette, Missouri, edited by Weston F. Birch, published the proceedings of the mob as follows:

At a meeting of the citizens of Jackson county, Missouri, called for the purpose of adopting measures to rid themselves of the sect of fanatics, called Mormons, held at Independence on the 20th day of July, 1833,—which meeting was composed of gentlemen from every part of the county, there being present between four and five hundred persons: the meeting was organized by calling Colonel Richard Simpson to the chair and appointing James H. Flournoy and Colonel Samuel D. Lucas, secretaries,—it was resolved, that a committee of seven be appointed to report an address to the public, in relation to the object of this meeting; and the chair named the following gentlemen to wit: Russel Hicks, Esq., Robert Johnson, Henry Chiles, Esq., Colonel James Hambright, Thomas Hudspeth, Joel F. Chiles and James M. Hunter. The meeting then adjourned, and convened again, when Robert Johnson, the chairman of the said committee, submitted for the consideration of the meeting, the following address:

"This meeting, professing to act, not from the excitement of the moment, but under a deep and abiding conviction, that the occasion is one that calls for cool deliberation, as well as energetic action, deem it proper to lay before the public an expose of our peculiar situation, in regard to this singular sect of pretended Christians; and a solemn declaration of our unalterable determination to amend it.

"The evil is one that no one could have foreseen, and is therefore unprovided for by the laws; and the delays incident to legislation would put the mischief beyond remedy.

"But little more than two years ago, some two or three of these people made their appearance on the Upper Missouri, and they now number some twelve hundred souls in this county; and each successive autumn and spring pours forth its swarms among us, with a gradual falling of the character of those who compose them; until it seems that those communities from which they come, were flooding us with the very dregs of their composition. Elevated, as they mostly are, but little above the condition of our blacks, either in regard to property or education; they have become a subject of much anxiety on that part, serious and well grounded complaints having been already made of their corrupting influence on our slaves.

"We are daily told, and not by the ignorant alone, but by all classes of them, that we, (the Gentiles,) of this county are to be cut off, and our lands appropriated by them for inheritances… Most of those who have already come, are characterized by the profoundest ignorance, the grossest superstition, and the most abject poverty… it requires no gift of prophecy to tell that the day is not far distant when the civil government of the county will be in their hands; when the sheriff, the justices, and the county judges will be Mormons, or persons wishing to court their favor from motives of interest or ambition…

…We feel called on by every consideration of self-preservation, good society, public morals, and the fair prospects, that if not blasted in the germ, await this young and beautiful county, at once to declare, and we do hereby most solemnly declare;—

1.    —That no Mormon shall in future move and settle in this county.

2.    —That those now here, who shall give a definite pledge of their intention, within a reasonable time to remove out of the county, shall be allowed to remain unmolested until they have sufficient time to sell their property, and close their business, without any material sacrifice.

3.    —That the editor of the Star be required forthwith to close his office, and discontinue the business of printing in this county; and as to all other stores and shops belonging to the sect, their owners must in every case strictly comply with the terms of the second article of this declaration; and upon failure prompt and efficient measures will be taken to close the same.

4.    —That the Mormon leaders here, are required to use their influence in preventing any further emigration of their distant brethren to this county, and to counsel and advise their brethren here to comply with the above requisitions.

5.    —That those who fail to comply with these requisitions, be referred to those of their brethren who have the gifts of divination, and of unknown tongues, to inform them of the lot that awaits them.'

"Which address being read and considered, was unanimously adopted…

And after an adjournment of two hours, the meeting again convened, and the committee of twelve reported that they had called on Mr. Phelps, the editor of the Star; Edward Partridge, the Bishop of the sect; and Mr. Gilbert, the keeper of the Lord's store house; and some others; and that they declined giving any direct answer to the requisitions made of them, and wished an unreasonable time for consultation, not only with their brethren here, but in Ohio.

"Whereupon it was unanimously resolved by the meeting, that the Star printing office should be razed to the ground, the type and press secured. Which resolution was, with the utmost order, and the least noise and disturbance possible, forthwith carried into execution, as also some other steps of a similar tendency; but no blood was spilled, nor any blows inflicted. The meeting then adjourned till the 23rd instant, to meet again to know further concerning the determination of the Mormons.

"Resolved, that a copy of these proceedings be posted up at the post office in this place, for the information of all concerned; and that the secretaries of this meeting send copies of the same to the principal editors in the eastern and middle states for publication; that the Mormon brethren may know at a distance that the gates of Zion are closed against them—that their interests will be best promoted by remaining among those who know and appreciate their merits."

Richard Simpson, Chairman,

S. D. Lucas,

J. H. Flournoy, Secretaries.”

…The foregoing is copied entire to give one sample of hypocritical bombast, and current falsehoods, with which the country was flooded in the early days of this Church. The declaration of the mob, by which they pledged to each other their lives, their bodily powers, fortunes, and sacred honors to remove the Church from Jackson county, is a very good climax for all the arguments used, falsehoods hoods set forth, and even a full interpretation of the sublime admission that "vengeance belongs to God alone." The events that followed from this time till November, explain the modus operandi much more clearly than the publication in the Monitor, or other papers that generally were so willing to give the western missionaries, the doctors, lawyers, judges, justices, sheriffs, constables, military officers and other distinguished personages a fair chance against the Mormons.

On the same day (July 23rd), while the brethren in Missouri were preparing to leave the county, through the violence of the mob, the cornerstones of the Lord's House were laid in Kirtland, after the order of the Holy Priesthood.

August 2.—I received the following: [D&C 97].” (*History of the Church*, 1:390-400)

**DC 97:1 the voice of my Spirit**

“The Lord, speaking of scripture, said: ‘These words are not of men nor of man, but of me; . . . for it is my voice which speaketh them unto you; for they are given by my Spirit unto you . . . ; wherefore, you can testify that you have heard my voice, and know my words’ (D&C 18:34-36). To hear the voice of the Lord in the scripture simply means to feel the Spirit of the Lord, because the Lord speaks ‘by the voice of my Spirit’ (D&C 75:1). Furthermore, the Lord's ‘voice is Spirit’ (D&C 88:66).

“Thus there is a relationship between the written scripture and the voice of the Lord, or personal revelation. The same Spirit that gave the written word quickens it as one who is prepared reads it. Taking all these insights together, we may conclude that if we wish to guide our life by the Spirit, we cannot do it without also being a spiritual student of the [scriptures].” (M. Catherine Thomas, *Watch and Be Ready: Preparing for the Second Coming of the Lord*[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1994], 30 - 31)

**DC 97:3-5  Parley P. Pratt… shall continue to preside over the school in the land of Zion**

**Parley P. Pratt**

In the latter part of summer and in the autumn, I devoted almost my entire time in ministering among the churches; holding meetings; visiting the sick; comforting the afflicted, and giving counsel. A school of Elders was also organized, over which I was called to preside. This class, to the number of about sixty, met for instruction once a week. The place of meeting was in the open air, under some tall trees, in a retired place in the wilderness, where we prayed, preached and prophesied, and exercised ourselves in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Here great blessings were poured out, and many great and marvelous things were manifested and taught. The Lord gave me great wisdom, and enabled me to teach and edify the Elders, and comfort and encourage them in their preparations for the great work which lay before us. I was also much edified and strengthened. To attend this school I had to travel on foot, and sometimes with bare feet at that, about six miles. This I did once a week, besides visiting and preaching in five or six branches a week. (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt,* edited by his son, Parley P. Pratt [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 77)

**DC 97:6 there are those that must needs be chastened**

Some of the best Brethren had been sent to Jackson County to establish Zion.  However, among the leading Brethren, a spirit of discontent and criticism prevailed in early 1833. Sidney Gilbert and William W. Phelps had sent accusatory letters to Kirtland. While those letters are not extant, the response and warning of the Prophet is as follows:

The brethren in Kirtland pray for you unceasingly, for, knowing the terrors of the Lord, they greatly fear for you… Our hearts are greatly grieved at the spirit which is breathed both in your letter and that of Brother Gilbert's, the very spirit which is wasting the strength of Zion like a pestilence; and if it is not detected and driven from you, it will ripen Zion for the threatened judgments of God. Remember God sees the secret springs of human action, and knows the hearts of all living.

…All we can say by way of conclusion is, if the fountain of our tears be not dried up, we will still weep for Zion. This from your brother who trembles for Zion, and for the wrath of heaven, which awaits her if she repent not.

{Signed} Joseph Smith, Jun. (*History of the Church*, 1:316-317)

**DC 97:8 hearts are honest**

**Joseph B. Wirthlin**

To be without guile is to be pure in heart—an essential virtue of those who would be counted among true followers of Christ. He taught in the Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8; see also 3 Ne. 12:8). He revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that Zion is the pure in heart (see D&C 97:21) and that a house is to be built in Zion in which the pure in heart shall see God (see D&C 97:10–16).

If we are without guile, we are honest, true, and righteous. All of these are attributes of Deity and are required of the Saints. Those who are honest are fair and truthful in their speech, straightforward in their dealings, free of deceit, and above stealing, misrepresentation, or any other fraudulent action. Honesty is of God and dishonesty of the devil; the devil was a liar from the beginning. Righteousness is living a life that is in harmony with the laws, principles, and ordinances of the gospel.

As parents know, little children are, by their nature, without guile. They speak the thoughts of their minds without reservation or hesitance as we have learned as parents when they embarrass us at times. They do not deceive. They set an example of being without guile. (“Without Guile,”*Ensign*, May 1988, 80–81)

**DC 97:8 observe their covenants by sacrifice**

It is impossible to observe one’s covenants and not make a sacrifice.  The temple covenants include the law of sacrifice.  The baptismal covenants require obedience which in turn requires sacrificing the ways of the world for the ways of the Lord.

“We do observe our covenants by sacrifice.

We sacrifice our willfulness and gain self control.

We sacrifice our money and gain spiritual riches.

We sacrifice our ignorance and gain knowledge.

We sacrifice our preconceptions and gain understanding.

We sacrifice our comfort and gain peace.

We sacrifice our time and we gain eternity.

In one of the great hymns of this gospel dispensation, ‘Praise to the Man,’ William W. Phelps expressed a truism of the gospel: ‘Sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven.’ (Hymns, No. 27)” (*LDS Church News*, 1991, 02/16/91)

Those who think they can make covenants with their God and not be required to make a sacrifice do not understand the scriptures or the Lord. Two of the greatest exalting principles in revealed religion are covenants and sacrifice.  The very powers of godliness reside covenants made with real authority.  Sacrifice is also required, as the Prophet said: “a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation.” (*Lectures on Faith*, 6:7)

**M. Russell Ballard**

Listen to the language of the scriptures as they describe the level of sacrifice the Lord requires of us: “Offer your whole souls as an offering unto[God]” (Omni 1:26; see also Mosiah 2:24). “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Rom. 12:1). The Lord Himself has said that we should keep our “covenants by sacrifice—yea, every sacrifice which I, the Lord, shall command” (D&C 97:8). The sacrifice the Lord asks of us is to wholly rid ourselves of the “natural man” (Mosiah 3:19) and all the ungodliness associated with it. When we completely surrender ourselves to the Lord, then He will cause a mighty change in us and we will become a new person, justified, sanctified, and born again with His image in our countenances. (“The Law of Sacrifice,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 13)

**John A Widstoe**

We cannot really live up to our covenants as we should unless we sacrifice. But what does sacrifice matter when we are in the cause of the Lord and feel the power of the spirit of God? Many years ago the message came, "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10.) We can trust him. We give a little, and the Lord returns ten-fold, often a hundred- fold. Look at the men of our own Church, who have spent years and years in service to the great cause. They have prospered, not only temporally but spiritually. To them we go for help and counsel. From them we receive support, to make our own lives more beautiful. Of course, sacrifice is required of us; but we, with a great world commission, must lift our eyes to it, prepare for it, have faith for it, and try to do what the Lord requires of us.  If we stand ready to give full service, not half service, not half surrender but complete surrender, we shall become mighty men. (*Conference Report*, April 1945, Afternoon Meeting 95)

**DC 97:10 a house should be built unto me in the land of Zion**

The Lord wants the saints to build him a temple.  They have come from Zion to Kirtland to ask the Prophet what should be done, “We have been forced to sign an agreement that we will leave the county.”  What should we do?  Should we leave? Should we fight?  Should the Kirtland saints come to our aid?  Should we move back to Kirtland? We can only imagine what sort of response they expected from their young Prophet.

The Lord’s advice to the saints in this predicament is to build a temple and to do it quickly.  That doesn’t seem to make sense.   The Missourians don’t want the Mormons to take over the local governments; they are concerned about the threat of their growing influence. Amidst this prejudice, the Lord asks them to build a large visible structure—a monument of their faith for all to see.  Isn’t that just going to increase the anger of the Missouri mob?

Well, the Lord’s ways are higher than man’s ways.  When we ask Him what we should do, He often commands us to do something that doesn’t make any sense to the mortal mind.  Then we are in a predicament.  Our mortal mind doesn’t understand the answer to the inquiry.  We might not have the faith to do what the Lord asks.  We may choose the course which makes the most sense to us—only to realize that our faithless disobedience brings upon us the displeasure of God.

At this point, the leading brethren from Missouri do not understand the importance of temples.  They have never seen one.  None of them have received temple ordinances.  They have *not* been taught for years about the importance of latter-day temples.  The Prophet Joseph was the only latter-day saintwho had any vision of what the Lord had in mind for his people.  This is likely one of the reasons that the Missouri brethren didn’t follow the Lord’s counsel and quickly build a temple.  To them, it probably seemed irrelevant.  But they were wrong, and the consequences were deadly.

“It seems a strange thing, perhaps, that the Lord would choose this time to emphasize the building of the temple, especially in light of the agreement already reached by the Church leadership in Missouri to move. It would require great faith and unity among the Saints and an unquestioning sense of obedience to a prophet's counsel. It would also require the purity of heart that the Lord gave as a definition of Zion in this same section. The Saints did not rise to the challenge; nothing was done for the building of a temple. In the meantime, the persecution increased.” (S. Michael Wilcox, *Doctrines for Exaltation: The 1989 Sperry Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants,* ed. by Susan Easton Black [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], 256 - 257)

**Parley Pratt**

This revelation was not complied with by the leaders and Church in Missouri, as a whole; notwithstanding many were humble and faithful. Therefore, the threatened judgment was poured out to the uttermost, as the history of the five following years will show. (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt,* edited by his son, Parley P. Pratt [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 77)

**DC 97:12 this is the tithing and the sacrifice which I, the Lord, require**

To understand the context of the Lord’s use of the word *tithing* in this verse, we turn to the heading for section 119:

Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Far West, Missouri, July 8, 1838, in answer to his supplications: “O Lord show unto thy servants how much thou requires of the properties of thy people for a tithing.” *HC* 3:44.  The law of tithing, as understood today, had not been given to the Church previous to this revelation.  The term “tithing” in the prayer just quoted and in previous revelations (64:23; 85:3; 97:11) had meant not just one-tenth, but all free-will offerings, or contributions, to the Church funds.

**Gordon B. Hinckley**

Sacrifice is the very essence of religion; it is the keystone of happy home life, the basis of true friendship, the foundation of peaceful community living, of sound relations among people and nations. . . .

Without sacrifice there is no true worship of God. I become increasingly convinced of that every day. "The Father gave his Son, and the Son gave his life," and we do not worship unless we give—give of our substance, give of our time, give of our strength, give of our talent, give of our faith, give of our testimonies. ("Without Sacrifice There Is No True Worship," *BYU Speeches of the Year, October 17, 1962*, p. 4.)

A religion which requires devotion, which asks for sacrifice, which demands discipline, also enjoys the loyalty of its membership and the interest and respect of others. (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 565

**Lorenzo Snow**

We have found the treasure in the field, we have found the pearl of great price, and now we have got to give all that we have for it, at one time or another. The Lord has said that He will prove us even unto death, to see whether we will stand by the covenants we have made with Him. Some Latter-day Saints have things in their possession which are so valuable to them that they would prefer death to the loss of those things. We have to deal with facts, not a mere ideal. In one sense, it is a hard thing for us to sell all that we have that we may secure these glories that have been opened to our view; but it will pay us in the end. (*The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1984], 115)

**DC 97:12 that there may be a house built unto me for the salvation of Zion**

“The words Zion and temple belong in the same sentence together. In August 1833, as Saints attempted against much persecution to establish a geographic Zion in Jackson County, Missouri, the Prophet Joseph Smith was counseled in revelation to build a house unto the Lord ‘for the salvation of Zion’ (D&C 97:12). The temple is the key to salvation, it said, because it is a place of thanksgiving, a place of instruction, and a place of understanding ‘in all things’ (see D&C 97:12–14). Then comes this glorious promise: ‘Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God. … Therefore, … let Zion rejoice, for this is Zion—THE PURE IN HEART; therefore, let Zion rejoice, while all the wicked shall mourn’ (D&C 97:16, 21; emphasis added). For Zion, the pure in heart, the temple holds the key that unlocks holy places—places of rejoicing—while those in Babylon’s byways are condemned to mourn.” (Lance B. Wickman, “Stand Ye in Holy Places,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 83)

**DC 97:13 a place of thanksgiving for all saints, and for a place of instruction**

**Joseph B. Wirthlin**

We can seek to enter holy temples frequently to perform essential ordinances regularly for others who have preceded us. Temple work enables us to do for others what they cannot do for themselves. It is a labor of love that permits our forefathers to continue their progress toward eternal life. As valuable and beneficial as temple work is to them, it is equally valuable to us. The House of the Lord is a place where we can escape from the mundane and see our lives in an eternal perspective. We can ponder instructions and covenants that help us understand more clearly the plan of salvation and the infinite love of our Heavenly Father for his children. We can ponder our relationship to God, the Eternal Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ. We learn from the Doctrine and Covenants that a temple is a place of thanksgiving, “a place of instruction for all those who are called to the work of the ministry in all their several callings and offices;

 “That they may be perfected in the understanding of their ministry, in theory, in principle, and in doctrine, in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth.” (D&C 97:13–14.)

Regular temple work can provide spiritual strength. It can be an anchor in daily life, a source of guidance, protection, security, peace, and revelation. No work is more spiritual than temple work. (“Seeking the Good,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 88)

**DC 97:14 that they may be perfected… in theory, in principle, and in doctrine**

**Neal A. Maxwell**

We can come to the temples to **learn**: "That [we] may be perfected in the understanding of [our] ministry, in theory, in principle, and in doctrine, in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth" (D&C 97:14).

And we come to the temple to **feel**: "That all people who shall enter upon the threshold of the Lord's house may feel thy power, and feel constrained to acknowledge that thou hast sanctified it, and that it is thy house, a place of thy holiness" (D&C 109:13).

And we come to the temple to **grow**: "That they may grow up in thee, and receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost, and be prepared to obtain every needful thing" (D&C 109:15).

And we come to the temple to **prepare to meet the Lord**. (*Not My Will, But Thine*[Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1998], 136, emphasis added)

**DC 97:15 do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled**

**Gordon B. Hinckley**

This, I submit, is descriptive and definitive and forceful language from the Lord concerning His holy House.

Each of our temples has on its face the statement, “Holiness to the Lord,” to which I should like to add the injunction “Keep His House holy!”

I submit that every man who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood has an obligation to see that the House of the Lord is kept sacred and free of any defilement. This obligation rests primarily and inescapably upon the shoulders of bishops and stake presidents. They become the judges of worthiness concerning those eligible to enter the temple. Additionally, each of us has an obligation—first, as to his own personal worthiness, and secondly as to the worthiness of those whom he may encourage or assist in going to the House of the Lord. (“Keeping the Temple Holy,” *Ensign*, May 1990, 50)

**N. Eldon Tanner**

I am very sorry to report that we have cases where people, both men and women, have lied to go to the temple and to go on missions. The Lord has said that no unclean thing shall enter the temple of God. (See, e.g., D&C 97:15.) When one is being interviewed for a temple recommend or for a mission, he should realize that the bishop and stake president are representing the Lord and that their answers are to the Lord and their commitments to the Lord. The Lord knows and will not be mocked.

We have cases where people have gone to the temple unworthily and have had a guilty conscience for years, wondering whether the ordinance will be binding or effective, and they have come to the President of the Church heartbroken to ask forgiveness and to get the matter cleared up. Let us be honest, true, chaste, benevolent, and virtuous. (See A of F 1:13.) (“Are You Taking Your Priesthood for Granted?” *Ensign*, May 1976, 44)

**Harold B. Lee**

The Lord has said [concerning temples], "And ye shall not suffer any unclean thing to come in unto it; and my glory shall be there, and my presence shall be there. But if there shall come into it any unclean thing, my glory shall not be there; and my presence shall not come into it." (D&C 94:8-9.)

Temple recommends should mean something. A nonmember sister wrote me saying that she had a very dear friend who would soon be married in the temple. She asked if it wouldn't be possible to witness this wedding. I'm sure that you know my response to her.

Another young girl came to me upset that her intended husband could not receive a temple recommend from his bishop. She raved on, "Why can't my future husband receive a recommend?" I answered, "Dear sister, don't you see what a protection this is? Perhaps the bishop and stake president are aware of circumstances that you know nothing of, or that he can't tell you. This young man must measure up to these standards before he can enter the Lord's house."

Sometimes bishops and stake presidencies lower their standards. How serious it is to let someone come into the temple unworthily! It would be more of a condemnation than a blessing.

Priesthood leaders must ascertain temple worthiness. Perhaps the most sacred place nearest to heaven on earth is our temple, to the extent that we go there undefiled and to the extent that our bishops and stake presidents make careful examination of all who apply for recommends to see that, so far as is possible, they are living certain standards that would not prevent them coming there with any uncleanness that would defile the spirit that we wish to be there.

Remember that now. Remember our sacred responsibilities and our hope that we ourselves might begin to make sure that every time we go, we go with clean hands and with pure hearts and we teach this to others. (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee,*edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], 581)

**DC 97:16 all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God**

**David B. Haight**

It is true that some have actually seen the Savior, but when one consults the dictionary, he learns that there are many other meanings of the word see, such as coming to know Him, discerning Him, recognizing Him and His work, perceiving His importance, or coming to understand Him.

Such heavenly enlightenment and blessings are available to each of us. (“Temples and Work Therein,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 61)

**DC 97:18-20 if Zion do these things she shall prosper… and become very great**

“The Saints did not build the temple in Jackson County. The command to build one ‘speedily’ must have sounded to them like a strange demand in light of their situation. Their leaders had been tarred and feathered. Their press had been destroyed and their homes ransacked and burned. Yet the Lord was counseling them to walk into the center of Independence and start laying the foundation of a temple.

“I have often wondered what would have happened if all the Saints in Missouri had dropped whatever they were doing, picked up their tools, and marched, en masse, to Independence and started digging foundations. It would have taken tremendous courage, but the history of the Church might have been much different. Let us never underestimate the protective power of the temple. ‘Every time a temple is dedicated to the Lord,’**Spencer W. Kimball** said, ‘the darkness pushes farther back, . . . and light comes into the world.’ (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball,* p. 534.)” (S. Michael Wilcox, *House of Glory: Finding Personal Meaning in the Temple* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995], 65 - 66)

**DC 97:21 this is Zion—THE PURE IN HEART**

**Hugh Nibley**

God has given us the perfect definition: Zion is the pure in heart—the pure in heart, not merely the pure in appearance. It is not a society or religion of forms and observances, of pious gestures and precious mannerisms: it is strictly a condition of the heart. Above all, Zion is pure, which means "not mixed with any impurities, unalloyed"; it is all Zion and nothing else. It is not achieved wherever a heart is pure or where two or three are pure, because it is all pure—it is a society, a community, and an environment into which no unclean thing can enter. "Henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean" (3 Nephi 20:36). It is not even pure people in a dirty environment, or pure people with a few impure ones among them; it is the perfectly pure in a perfectly pure environment. "I . . . will contend with Zion . . . and chasten her until she overcomes and is clean before me" (D&C 90:36).

This makes it so different from our world that it almost begins to sound distasteful. But a moment's reflection will show that Zion cannot possibly be other than wholly pure. For Zion is the eternal order; it has existed elsewhere from the eternities and will someday be permanently established on this earth. Even the smallest impurity or flaw in anything designed to continue forever would, in the course of an infinite stretching of time, become a thing of infinite mischief. The most perfect structures men have been able to erect have been short-lived because of tiny, all-but-imperceptible flaws. Hence, any flaw, no matter how small, must be removed from a system designed to be timeless; otherwise, there will be no end of trouble. (*Approaching Zion*, edited by Don E. Norton [Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1989], 27)

**Bruce R. McConkie**

Please note: Zion is people; Zion is the saints of God; Zion is those who have been baptized; Zion is those who have received the Holy Ghost; Zion is those who keep the commandments; Zion is the righteous; or in other words, as our revelation recites: “This is Zion—the pure in heart.”(D&C 97:21.) (“Come: Let Israel Build Zion,”*Ensign*, May 1977, 117)

**David O. McKay**

Purity of heart—Zion is the pure in heart, we have been told, and the strength of this Church lies in the purity of the thoughts and lives of its members, then the testimony of Jesus abides in the soul, and strength comes to each individual to withstand the evils of the world. (*Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], 153)

**Brigham Young**

What is Zion? In one sense Zion is the pure in heart. But is there a land that ever will be called Zion? Yes, brethren. What land is it? It is the land that the Lord gave to Jacob, who bequeathed it to his son Joseph, and his posterity, and they inhabit it, and that land is North and South America. That is Zion as to land, as to Territory, and location. The children of Zion have not yet much in their possession, but their territory is North and South America to begin with. As to the spirit of Zion, it is in the hearts of the Saints, of those who love and serve the Lord with all their might, mind, and strength. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 2: 253 - 254)

**Brigham Young**

This is the land of Zion; and who are Zion? The pure in heart are Zion; they have Zion within them. Purify yourselves, sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and have the Zion of God within you, and then you will rejoice more and more. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 8: 198 - 199.)

**DC 97:25 Zion shall escape if she observe to do all things whatsoever I have commanded her**

**Joseph Fielding Smith**

We have the means of escape through obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Will we escape? When I see, even among the Latter-day Saints the violation of the laws of the Lord, I fear and I tremble. I have been crying repentance among the Stakes of Zion for thirty years, calling upon the people to turn to the Lord, keep His commandments, observe the Sabbath Day, pay their honest tithing, do everything the Lord has commanded them to do, to live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.

By doing this we shall escape the calamities. (*Conference Report*, October 1940, Afternoon Meeting 117.)

**Melvin J. Ballard**

My brethren and sisters, why should we hope to escape, who have been baptized into this Church, yet ignore the commandments of the Lord? For there are among us those who do not keep the Word of Wisdom, some of us do not pay our tithing; we do not sanctify ourselves by adding unto our faith, virtue: to virtue, knowledge, to knowledge, temperance, and patience, and godliness, and brotherly kindness. Why should we claim exemption—we who know the truth, we who have been warned, we who will testify that we believe God has spoken—why should we escape if we do not keep the commandments of the Lord? And I say this with a feeling in my heart of deep appreciation that the Latter-day Saints are, notwithstanding all this, the best people in the world…  The Lord is speaking… to the whole Church, crying repentance unto us, calling us to set our houses in order, to keep the commandments of the Lord. (*Conference Report*, June 1919, Second Day—Morning Session 89.)

**DC 97:26 If she observe not to do whatsoever I have commanded her**

**Orson Pratt**

Here we perceive what the Lord intends to do both for Zion and for the wicked. Zion shall spread herself if she will only keep the commandments of God, and she will become great, glorious and terrible; or as one of old said—The church will come forth out of the wilderness, leaning upon the arm of her beloved, and we will be as fair as the sun, as clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners. So will Zion be clothed upon with the glory of her God and armed with the panoply of Heaven, and the nations will fear and tremble because of her, for God will be in the midst of Zion, and he hath sworn by the power of his might that he will be her refuge, her high tower and her strength, and he will uphold and sustain her, if she keep his commandments in all things; but if not, here is another declaration to all—fathers and mothers, middle aged, old and young—who transgress the commandments of God, "If Zion does not observe to do all things whatsoever that I have commanded her, I will visit her according to all her works, I will visit her with sore tribulations—with pestilence, plague, vengeance, sword, with the flame of devouring fire," &c.

The Lord means what he says, He has told us in one of the first revelations published in this book, that though the heavens and the earth should pass away, not one of the prophecies and predictions contained in these revelations should go unfulfilled; therefore if Zion sins, if her people suffer pride to arise in their hearts, and follow after the foolish fashions of the Gentiles who come into their midst, and are lifted up one above another, the rich and wealthy looking down upon the poor with scorn and derision because they cannot clothe themselves in the same costly apparel as the rich, and begin to make distinctions of classes among themselves, behold the Lord will visit Zion according to all her works, and he will purge her and pour forth his judgments upon her, according to that which he has spoken.

I hope that we shall take a course to prevent these things coming upon us. It is better to be chastened and receive judgment in this world, even if it be sword, pestilence, famine and the flame of a devouring fire, if we can be brought to repentance thereby, than to remain unchastised and go down swiftly to the pit. If we, because of our sins, need chastising by the Almighty, let the chastisement come while we are in the flesh, that we may repent; and I would say still further, and pray in the name of the Lord, "Oh Lord, if chastisement must come, may it come from thine hands." When the Lord through the Prophet gave David the choice of one of three terrible judgments—first to fall into the hands of his enemies, and for the people of Israel to be afflicted many years; second, a lengthy famine, and third, three days' pestilence, he chose the three days' pestilence, for he said it was better to fall into the hands of the Lord, who was full of tender mercy, and who might repent and withdraw the chastisement, than to fall into the hands of the wicked who have no mercy. I would say the same so far as my feelings are concerned.  (*Journal of Discourses, 26 vols*. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 15: 334 - 335.)

**DC 97:26 I will visit her…with pestilence, with plague, with sword, with vengeance, with devouring fire**

**Parley Pratt**

This revelation was not complied with by the leaders and Church in Missouri, as a whole; notwithstanding many were humble and faithful. Therefore, the threatened judgment was poured out to the uttermost, as the history of the five following years will show. (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt,* edited by his son, Parley P. Pratt [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 77)

**Bruce R. McConkie**

We do not say that all of the Saints will be spared and saved from the coming day of desolation. But we do say there is no promise of safety and no promise of security except for those who love the Lord and who are seeking to do all that he commands.

It may be, for instance, that nothing except the power of faith and the authority of the priesthood can save individuals and congregations from the atomic holocausts that surely shall be.

And so we raise the warning voice and say: Take heed; prepare; watch and be ready. There is no security in any course except the course of obedience and conformity and righteousness.

For thus saith the Lord: “The Lord’s scourge shall pass over by night and by day, and the report thereof shall vex all people; yea, it shall not be stayed until the Lord come; …

 “Nevertheless, Zion shall escape if she observe to do all things whatsoever I have commanded her,” saith the Lord.

 “But if she observe not to do whatsoever I have commanded her, I will visit her according to all her works, with sore affliction, with pestilence, with plague, with sword, with vengeance, with devouring fire.” (D&C 97:23, 25–26.)

O God, our Father, wilt thou grant us peace and security and safety in the days of tribulation that shall come like a whirlwind upon all the earth.

Wilt thou hedge up the evil powers, and open up the way before us, thy people, that as individuals and as a Church we may stand independent of every creature beneath the celestial world. (“Stand Independent above All Other Creatures,” *Ensign*, May 1979, 93-94)

**Dean L. Larsen**

We should not forget the warning given by the Lord to the Latter-day Saints. (quotes D&C 97:25–26.)

We must recognize from this warning that it is not enough to be a Latter-day Saint in name only. It is not enough to simply declare that we are a chosen people of the Lord. We must keep the trust he has given us. We must qualify for his blessing by the way we remain different from the world in our obedience to his laws. Otherwise, we have no promise, and our fate will be the fate of the world.

…there are too many whose lives are being contaminated by the worldly trends. This is not a light matter. The judgments of God will not be withheld from those who willfully, knowing who they are and what is expected of them, allow themselves to be drawn along the precarious paths of worldly conduct. To such as there are who are within the sound of my voice tonight, I say: Take the upward path. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” (Gal. 6:7.) (“A Royal Generation,” *Ensign*, May 1983, 34–35)